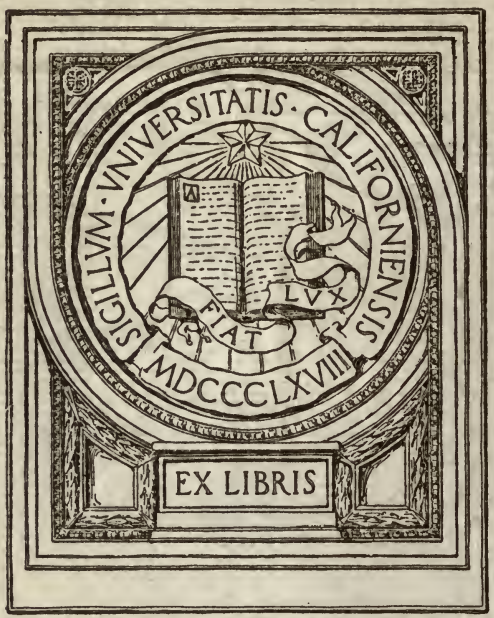
F
855
.2
L134

GIFT OF
AUTHOR



WITHDRAWN

BANCROFT
LIBRARY

THE LIBRARY
OF
THE UNIVERSITY
OF CALIFORNIA

M. ROBBINS LAMPSON

THE BANCROFT LIBRARY
F855
.2
L134
UNIV. OF
CALIFORNIA

On Reaching Sixteen

AND OTHER VERSES

BY

M. ROBBINS LAMPSON

"For though my rime be ragged,
Tattered and jagged,
Rudely rayne beaten,
Rusty and moothe eaten,
If ye talke well therewith
It hath in it some pith."
—John Skelton (1460-1529).

Copyright, 1916, by M. Robbins Lampson

Published by
The Author
Geyserville, California
Price $0.5 , Net.

BANCROFT LIBRARY
UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA

DEDICATION

TO MISS ERMINIE WIEDERSHEIM

803887

UNIV. OF CALIFORNIA
THE BANCROFT LIBRARY

Introduction

In California there are many winsome regions, but none comparable to the valley prettily called Sotoyome.

It is not to be said that the upper Russian River valley has the noblest scenery in our state, nor the most sublime, nor yet the most romantic. For we know of the majesty of Shasta, of the grandeur of the Sierras, and of the wild beauty of the sea coast. But nowhere is to be found a lyric loveliness to match this pleasant district with its sweetness of nature's contour, the fragrance of running waters and of growing things.

It would seem inevitable that this district, which nature has moulded so tenderly, should in gratitude create a poet or artist who could sympathetically interpret the delicacy of his environs to the world.

Why the sap that permeates the flowers and the trees of Sotoyome, the delicate, glistening lupin and the massive oaks, had not entered into the blood of its youths and maidens—into the brains, I might better say, for physical charm has its allure in plenty here—and inspired a poet, had been to me a matter of regretful wonderment. But one day, eight months ago, seated at a newspaper desk, I opened a letter addressed to my paper and postmarked Geyserville. Therein I found a strain of the sap of Sotoyome, a bit of verse of promise. The writer was Myrle Robbins Lampson.

Fortunately for me I did not return the verse with the usual note of rejection which leaves the writer in a cul de sac. But I opened a correspondence with the youthful writer, and have had the pleasure of seeing his native talent expand during less than a year of lyric fecundity; his verse gain precision and his imagination mature, warm and widen. Now it seems, my theory that the Russian River valley should produce a poet shall be verified.

While the poetic faculty achieves its perfection more early than does any other form of art, it seldom attains power that can withstand critical assault until the writer is in the twenties.

Myrle Robbins Lampson is now sixteen years of age. He has four fine and fruitful years to go before we may even speculate upon the reaches of his talent. But we know he is a youth of promise, and it is the inestimable privilege of those of us who have come in contact with him to do what we may to insure the fulfillment of that promise. Of course, put to the test, the fulfillment and the achievement lie finally and solely with our young friend.

Here, however, is an opportunity which we may never have again to encourage talent of high promise.

It is needless cruelty to withhold adverse criticism from one who is amenable to advice and susceptible to suggestion; but it is wanton blindness to ignore the essence of beauty wherever found.

The friends of Myrle Robbins Lampson have discovered charm and grace in his verses, and it is their hope that others will find, too, a reflection in his lines of the loveliness of the valley which has nourished him.

ARTHUR L. PRICE.

San Francisco, June 1, 1916.

FOREWORD

To those who pay me the compliment of reading these youthful attempts at poetry there is little to say. These verses have no moral to propound, no message to tell, no great truths to sing. They were written merely because I felt like writing.

This volume, which makes its appearance simultaneously with my graduation from high school, is a souvenir of the occasion, as well as a summing up of seven years of writing. There are certain acknowledgments that I feel must be made, and I make them with pleasure. To my father and mother I owe whatever talent I possess; to Mr. Harry K. Cummings, my mentor for the past five years, I am indebted for his interest and help in my development. To Mr. Arthur L. Price, Literary Editor of the San Francisco "Examiner," and Miss Ovena Larson, my English teacher, I am grateful for untiring criticism and advice.

M. R. L.

Geyserville, Cal., June, 1916.

IN LOVING MEMORY

of the greatest influence of my life,

HARRY K. CUMMINGS

Who died June 14, 1916.

ON REACHING SIXTEEN

February 2, 1916.

The subtle waves of age move slowly on,
  And I, like driftwood, follow with the tide.
  Soon Time on Life's great shores so broad and wide
Will cast me with all boyhood's bounties gone.

What pity gladdest hours should e'er depart,
  That flowers fade before the ripening fruit!
  Manhood before me! Words themselves are mute;
I cannot speak the sadness of my heart.

I would not leave the happy haunts I love;
  I am a monarch in my boyish bliss;
Ah, why to further conquest must I move!

No age can know more joy than boyhood's span;
  No time of later life more sweet than this! . . .
I do not ever want to be a man!

THE OPEN ROAD
(Aet. 16)

(To my fellow students of the Healdsburg High School, with whom I graduated June 22, 1916.)

The open road to Manhood lies ahead,
And I, though loath to leave the paths of youth,
The ways that now I love, shall ever love,
Am straining eagerly to meet with life,
To run my destined course, to fight my fight,
To grapple things that ne'er disturb Youth's play,
And be a conqueror with other men.
I long to gain those heights where I can smile
At boyish victories, once held so dear,
And look on them as steps to my success.
Ah, I would laugh the hearty laugh of MEN,
And march life through with firm and stalwart tread.
Then greatest tasks would spur my energy,
And years be blissful miles upon the road,
The road that calls to Manhood and to Life!

SONNET

MARCH

In Sonoma County, California

(Aet. 16)

From "The Call," San Francisco, Cal.

When March has come, along the quiet ways,
Bordered by green with flowers overhung,
I wander where my spirit ever plays;
Exultingly I roam until among
The fair, grape-giving vales, where gladness reigns.
My heart, unbounded, feels, when on those hills,
And by the water's side, along those lanes,
With inner touch; the soul of Nature thrills
My being till the senses all are flown;
In blissful solitude, my heart is one
With Nature's heart, in mighty unison.
The wind's light song, the river's quiet moan,
Seem but an echo of the voice of God. . . .
Lifted from earth, I tread where few have trod!

IN BLOOM

(Aet. 15)

From "The Examiner," San Francisco, Cal.

Sweet breaks the dawn of happy day
  With rare perfume,
As calmly as the sun's last ray
  Brings stars in June.
Oh, glad the lark's wild, lusty note,
Ecstatic springing from his throat!—
The fields and woodlands are in bloom!

The orchards now with revelry
  Disperse all gloom,
As darker shades must ever flee
  The bright full moon.
Then join your hearts with hearts of trees,
And sing the song of birds and bees—
The fruitful orchards are in bloom!

SONNET

ON REACHING ONE

(Aet. 16)

To A. M. P., April 13, 1916.

In looking back, myself a babe I view
  In white short-dresses, blue-eyed, unaware
  Of all, save mother's loving touch and care.
I had a noisy rattle, bright and new,
And by my dimpled smile I flattered all.
  What pretty shoes upon my feet! At one
  I wondered at the brightness of the sun;
A mystery was the clock upon the wall!

Yet wondrous was the stride of that one year,
  For in it I had learned to recognize.
I knew that constant heart, who ever near,
Held me more dear than life she risked for mine;
  Who fondly saw within my baby eyes
A spark, not yet quite lost, of life divine!

GEYSER PEAK AT NIGHT

(Aet. 16)

If you would know a new delight,
  New beauties all aglow,
Behold the peak some clear June night
  When yet the moon is low.
Let myriad stars the sky emblaze
  And quiet reign in the air,
And there exultant in the maze
  The mount stands shimm'ring, fair;
Its slopes rise high above the hills
  To rule the night supreme;
The moon's light mist descends, and fills
  With argent, hazy gleam
The airy robes that crown the brow;
  And through the moonlit bars
There twinkles, far, serene, and low,
  The halo of the stars.

SONNET
ON READING WORDSWORTH'S "TINTERN ABBEY"
(Aet. 16)

Oft have I roamed by streams and on the hills;
  Long have I loved them, ah, I long have known
  That wildest joy of woodland fragrance blown
From vale to vale; and the ecstatic thrills
That swayed my frame while breathing forest air;
  And that refreshing sound which calms the soul
  When brooklets ripple; and the mighty roll
Of falling water;—bliss too great to bear!

These have I known, but never could express
When Nature's presence dazed with loveliness;
  And when afar from grove and brook they seemed
  Like half-forgotten glories I had dreamed.
But now I hear what oft I longed to tell:
My tongue was mute to what my heart knew well.

POPPIES
(Aet. 16)

Poppies, golden cups of sunshine,
Golden bells of joy and laughter,
Hanging from the earth toward heaven!

FRAGMENT
(Aet. 16)

Distant and far
The moon and the evening star
Shine out tonight;
The heavenly host is hidden in the blaze
Of silvery rays,
So burning and bright;
Venus alone surmounts the haze
Of argent light.

ROSES
(Aet. 16)

There is a charm in the roses
  As soft as the evening skies,
As sweet as the light that reposes
  Deep in my lady's eyes.

THE TRUCE OF PEACE

(Aet. 15)

Peace!
Stop firing till your war-born sons grow up;
Till once again is filled the hemlock cup;
Stop for the sharpening of the scythe of Death;
Stop while the bloody veterans get their breath;
Stop while your wives are welling up more tears!
Stop but to rest—this is a peace of years;
Stop till the hounds of hell again are loose!
Stop! Stop! this is your peace,—a truce!
The red, red blood within your veins
Cannot be held by worded chains,—
Cannot be held by Heaven's reins!
Peace!

TO PATIENCE

(Aet. 15)

Long hours, long days, long months, roll slowly past, and still
Like ceaseless waves splashing against relentless rocks,
Thou art unmoved, for shores may turn the wave, but not
Its perseverance! Fortitude, be with us yet!

ANXIETY

(Aet. 15)

The night is endless; in the bleeding heart
Pulsates desire, and Hope, forlorn, attends.

THE POTATO BLOSSOM

(Aet. 15)

A dearer beauty than in richer things
Within the common grows;
We fail to see the flow'r each season brings,
But wait the fairer rose.

We cannot find the joy of rainy days
In waiting for the sun;
We miss the pleasure of the duller ways,
To gain a brighter one.

Ambition should not lead us thus away
From deeds of every hour:
Dream not of roses, while there blooms today
The meek potato flower!

THY MOTHER'S PICTURE

To Henry Wiedersheim

(Aet. 15)

Thy mother's picture! Ah, so fair!
'Twas God, not Phidias, traced the hair
Divinely winding round the face
So full of womanhood and grace!

THE WAR'S CRY TO WOMANHOOD

(Aet. 15)

From "The Bulletin," San Francisco, Cal.

(Women in Europe are being told, "Bring children into the world for the benefit of the Nation, for the strengthening of future battle lines!"—Jane Addams.)

The war sends out an awful cry
To womanhood upon the earth;
It does not pity those who die,
Nor heed the living and their dearth;
It does not look at present loss,
Nor try the grim void to refill;
It scorns the presence of the Cross;
Its deadly fangs are never still:

To glut itself and fill the crimson sea,
War calls not only us, but those to be!

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!
For Noah's spouse, and his sons' wives
Gave to the earth its human lives!
Ye must repopulate with men
This war-torn world, and answer when
I call, I shriek for flesh, for blood,
With thine own flesh through motherhood!

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!
Fraternal blood gained battle line;
Regain for man the earth with thine;
Ah, with thy blood fill future field,
So I may gloat upon thy yield!
And in thy fruit bring forth but men
That I may taste the feast again.

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!
Arise from out the battle mist,
And to the croak of ravens list!
Bear children! Ah, a future age
And I demand our carnal wage;
All men I kill, I wound, I maim—
Ye must replace! Forget the shame!

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!
Prolong man's stay on earth! Men die!
Bear children! children! children! I
Must have still greater sacrifice—
These mangled corpses ill suffice!
Bear children! children! children! War
Am I, and need more food, and more!

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!

Ah, clamour of the vultures' call,
Ah, sensuous, growing battle-pall,
You are my life, and I must live;
O, women of the nations, give!
Bring forth thy life-blood, new and fresh!
I need more flesh! more flesh! more flesh!

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!
The ravens' cries are growing more,
And I must feed my lust for gore!
Forget the teachings of the past—
That ye are human—to the last!
Forget those things to memory dear,
Forget of life all that is near,
The struggle for uprighteousness,—
Forget all that, and I will bless!
Forget the customs of the age;
Forget, and give to swell my rage!
Forget the child, the birthright due,
Forget the love of husbands true!
Forget all but the hungry tide
Of blood that must be satisfied!

O, women of the nations, hark!
Ye are the wives within the ark!
Ye are my life, and I must live;
O, women of the nations, give!

The war sends out an awful cry
To womanhood upon the earth;
It does not pity those who die,
Nor heed the living and their dearth;
It does not look at present loss,
Nor try the grim void to refill;
It scorns the presence of the Cross;
Its deadly fangs are never still:

War calls not only us, but those to be,
To glut itself and fill the crimson sea!

POET'S EPITAPH

(Aet. 15)

Friends, mourn me not! Think of me as a bird
Earth-bound a few short days, and now set free.
The earth was not my home: the air was mine,
And once again is mine. The songs I sang
Were sad, imperfect, sung with fettered breath—
How can the fretting, captive bird sing free!
But now—th' eternal freshness of the blue,
And higher rising bliss and ecstacies,
Run rife within my soul, for I am free!
Ah, now my heart pours forth full melodies,
So that each moment of Infinity
Is overflowing,—as my heart has been. . . .
Friends, mourn me not, for I am happier now!

AGE

(Aet. 16)

I think today of age,—when I am old,—
And see myself a helpless, dirty man,
Unkempt, mouth-oozing and ambitionless.
I wonder what will then amuse my brain,
What thoughts? Will they be thoughts of joy, or sad?
Will I see life a shipwrecked, sinking hull,
Or harbor-resting with its cargo home?
Will hope be gone?
Ah, will I be alone,
Or blissful still with love?—my love will last!
And yet I know that even love shall go,
Or die, before I die! My youth cries out:
"Nay, love will never die, until you die,
And not before!" And still there is a dread
That it will go, and what will life be then?
A hollow shell? Or a completed day?

The very fire and spirit of my Youth
Revolts: I fear to undergo that time.
I shudder at recession, giving back
The force and vigor of the noon of life
For that weak age of saddest helplessness;
I dread the retrogression, going back
To infancy again; now hopeless, sad,
For childhood knows but joy; the past alone
Will then be mine—Youth lives in future years.

I do not think I ever shall grow old,
But if I do, and have bare, toothless gums,
And shrunken, shrivelled lips, and sallow skin,
And forehead wrinkled less from laughing joys
Than from the frowns of care and worried toil;
Have skinny, bony, meatless hands and arms,
And lose the light of mind as well as eye,
So that the past, which is the food of age,
Begins to dim; O, if it comes to that—
Before it comes to that—why let me die!

FOR THESE

(Aet. 15)

I slept and dreamed. A moment chaos reigned,
And then I heard the rhythm of the spheres,
The mighty-moving work of countless suns,
The music of the stars; and I beheld
Three spectres of another world, white-stoled
In heavenly robes as light as atmosphere;
Ethereal breathing; fair, but clouded, dim
With Christliness, too fine for eyes of men;
Celestial crowned, supernal as the stars.
They beckoned me, and said, "For you we come.
Death sweeps o'er many lands, and thousands die;
But Heaven has ordained that you, like Christ
Upon the Cross, may stay the bloody scythe,
May still this lethal orgy with your breath,
And give eternal peace to all mankind:
Will you your life-blood give upon the pyre?"
But life and love I loved, and answered, "Nay!"
And waking, shuddered at the grewsome thought.

I slept and dreamed, and in my vision came
Again the angels, now grown wan and sad,
With eyes of pity, calling as before,
"For you we come. Behold the battle dead!"
—I heard again the music of the spheres;
Then in that mechanism came a jar.
I, looking down, found not the vernal earth,
But there instead vast fields o'erstrewn with mounds,
And trenches overfilled with dead, bones bleached
Beneath the smoke-red sun, and in the mud
Stark corpses rotting—ah, ten million dead,
In graves, and graveless, and unnamed! Then cried
The Three, their sadness bursting like a dam
Of woe, "Will you give all upon the pyre?"
But life and love I loved, and answered, "Nay!
These are the dead, and I can naught avail!"
And waking, shuddered at the dream of death.

I slept and dreamed, and still again appeared
The Three, who pale and weak from misery
And half-abandoned hope, called yet once more
In doleful, faltering tones, "For you we come.
Behold the agony of Man!" Straightway
I wakened, not to life, but deeper dreams,
And there, through mistless ether, undefiled,
Pellucid, saw that fount of wasted blood,
The battle strife: men killing men, and life
Cut down like wheat before the scythe of Death;
The battle din, and cannon roar, and men
In torture from their gory wounds, and last,
The ruined homes of half the earth! My soul
Could not retain its woe, and crying, "Yes!"
I turned to find the Three were gone, and Christ
Stood in their stead. "Sweet life, but sweeter death
To die for these!" I murmured, yielding all
With willingness. But ere the sacrifice
I waked full sad at soul, because for Christ
And them I could not have that joyous pain.

AMO UNAM SOLAM
(Aet. 15)

I love one maid, and only one,
And oft I seek her face, her smiles,
And speak of love when day is done;
But ah, I cannot cope with wiles
Such as Apollo might in vain
With all his own have sought to gain.

But I will run the sun-god's race,
And love, not amour, giving chase,
Perhaps may win by swifter foot,
Ere Daphne yet has taken root.

TO A SPRING POET
(Aet. 15)

It's just a waste of time
To try to make a rhyme
    If you don't know how.
Have pity on the editors—
Leave poems to competitors,
    If you don't know how.

I've seen some awful rhymes;
I think they're worse than crimes—
    I shudder at them now.
Grim shadows of them, senseless,
With me alone, defenseless,
    Flit before my brow.

O poet of the spring,
Forget that you can sing—
    Aye, forget it now.
Have mercy on the editors—
Leave poems to competitors,
    If you don't know how.

WASHINGTON
(Aet. 15)

Aye, hail with pride our first and foremost man,
    Who saw true justice in a human light,
    And with a force and firmness fed by right,
    Led forth our nation from the gloom of night;
    Who bravely fought with Heaven's potent might.
And mounted o'er the mist to work God's plan!

From out drear despotism's darkness rose
    A man of noble mien and sturdy face;
    Whose eyes sweet Justice lit with kindly grace;
    In whom dishonor never found a place;
    Whose wake left us a mighty, free-born race
With greater liberties and calm repose.

INDIAN SUMMER

(Aet. 15)

From "Everywoman," San Francisco

The mists of morn first caught the ray
  Of the oncoming sun,
And sped it on like a gossip story
  Till light and earth were one.
Then the sun rose up in glory
As it neared the southern summits day by day;
  It found long shadows fast asleep
From yestereven's play;
  It made the golden splendors leap
Along the mountainway,
And dance as the cool winds whispered by;
  It glanced o'er the tree-topped hills,
  And sought the hearts of trickling rills
As it leaped into the sky.
And the red orb mounted higher,
  And viewed the valley's deepest glen;
The distant peaks all lost their fire,
  And changed to hazy blue again;
The eastern sky threw off its rosy strife,
  And turned to azure and to thoughts of day.
The forests rang with feathered life,
  And the deer hid her spotted fawn away.
The cool winds changed to zephyrs fair,
  Which roamed through grass and leafy bough;
They sought the brook and long played there,—
  They went to cool the mountain's brow.
Then was the time when the Indian
  Was glad as he roamed the wild,
For Nature loved this homely man,
  And on him gently smiled.
The air that he breathed was the breath of God,
And he drew it deep as the carefree can.
He roamed o'er the paths by sin untrod,
And as he moved in a listless way,
  He came to an open glade,
Where the sun sent full her illumined ray
  Near where a small brook played.
Here was the rough-tilled soil instead of sod,
  Here grew the green and Heaven-sent corn,—
Hiawatha's spirit stirred in every clod,
  The waving maize, Mondamin, combat worn.

It was the Indian summer, and the calm
  Of dying June slept in the hazy atmosphere.
The Indian sadly yearned for the happy past, but the balm
  Of the earth and air were greater still,
  And in the savage eye there rose a tear.
  Then like a man whom joys bereave of will,
Inspired he roamed through virgin air, on virgin sod.
Hand in hand with the Infinite and God.

It is the Indian summer, and the heart
  Of all mankind is glad.
From the fevered pulse of the city mart
  To the country's freest barefoot lad,
From the shore where the wild waves dash and part

To the dell where the poplar murmurs sweet and sad!
It is the Indian summer, and the soul
Of the world turns to the open, the free,
And the heart is pure, as the mind is whole,
As it basks in the warmth of eternity!

NO SORROW, NO REGRET

(Aet. 16)

I loved you once, and that sweet loving
Made me tread those hours on air;
That love is past, and you forgotten,
You so fickle, yet so fair.

I loved you once, and memory, waning,
Holds as though a dream that joy;
But then I knew, and you, inconstant,
Felt a bliss without alloy.

I loved you once;—now stars of memory
—With that sun forever set—
Are shining, soon to lose their lustre
To a sun that's greater yet.

I loved you once—there is no longing
For the past beyond recall;
Nor would I have my life severed
From one moment of it all!

TO AN EDELWEISS

(Aet. 16)

Here is a dainty edelweiss,
Sent with a message in the mail;
Once star-faced guardian of the ice,
Now I behold it, white and frail,
Afar from the snow-white cliff of its mountain home.

Fair maiden of the Alpine snow,
Do you miss the mountain's chillness here?
Do you long to be where lichens grow,
And be caressed by frosty air,
Across the bold Atlantic's surging foam?

Between these pages ever laid,
Where but admiring eyes shall look,
Ah, what a change, my pretty maid—
The Alpine ranges for a book!
Ah, may you ever feel the playing wind

On some bare glacier's rugged form,
Where you clung silent and alone,
Breasting the mountain's icy storm;
And may these western joys atone
For all the loves that you have left behind!

SONNET

COLUMBUS—1915

(Aet. 15)

Columbus, would that thou today couldst view
  This land of thine, these nations of the West,
  The fruit thy hand brought forth as Man progressed,
Time's great reward to those that rise and do.
Behold two continents in splendors young.
  Thy reason persevered and gave us much;
  These lands, these nations felt thy magic touch!
Would now thy eyes could see, and speak, thy tongue!

O father of the western hemisphere,
  Not thou the one who died in poverty,
But one whom all the world shall e'er revere!
Thy master mind gave greater lands a birth—
  They e'er in gratitude shall say of thee,
"Columbus! Lo, he gave Man half the earth!"

TWO POEMS ON CHARLES FROHMAN

(Aet. 15)

(Charles Frohman, the theatrical manager, was one of the victims of the "Lusitania" disaster. When a boy he wrote in his scrap book, "The whole, the boundless earth is mine." He was heard to say, as the "Lusitania" was sinking, "Why fear death? It is the most beautiful adventure of life!")

I.

YOUTH

The whole, the boundless earth is mine,
  Its fame, its sorrows, joys and sighs;
The whole, the boundless earth is mine,
  And all that therein lies!

Life's path is glowing bright ahead,
  Lit with the ardor of my years;
I will that I shall rise and tread
  Alone above my peers!

II.

AGE

The world was mine—now I the sea's;
  The great adventure comes at last.
Life must a greater wish appease,—
  My victory is past.

I reached the heights my yearning sought,
  Gained all earth held in store for me.
All boyish dreams my manhood wrought—
  Now immortality!

MR. GERMS
(Aet. 14)

(Headline—"Germs Like Boys Better Than Girls.")

I'm glad that someone likes us best,
  And though I never knew before,
He must be awful nice, and jest
  The best old guy. Gee, Sis was sore!
When she saw that, she got so mad
She fussed and raved about, and Dad—
  Well, that jest made him laugh and roar!

You bet! My dad's a friend of mine,—
  The only one I got, I s'pose,
Excepting Mr. Germs. He's fine!
  I know he'll never kick when clothes
Are torn, and yaller cats git hung,
And all the dolls' old necks git rung.
  They'll like us boys in time, who knows?

THE FARMER'S COW
(Aet. 15)

A farmer who to fair had led
A handsome cow, obscurely bred,
Awaited near, with sparkling eyes,
Well knowing HE would win the prize.
He saw the judges hesitate,
And thought, "Oh why deliberate!
My cow must surely lead the rest;
You must be blind for she is best!"

The judges finally contrive
To place his cow as number five.
The farmer's anger rises swift,
But "idiot" judges hold to fifth.

The farmer said, indignant, proud,
His angry tones none less the loud,
"I'd like to know, you judges wise,
Just why I didn't win first prize?"
One answered, farmer little heeding,
"Like you, dear sir, she lacks good breeding!"

TO Valentina
(Aet. 15)

I saw two lips, sweet lips, today,—
  Lips I would like to kiss in love;
  And they, like thine, could lightly move,
But ah, the eyes were far too gay!

I saw a girlish chin, like thine,
  But ah, the face,—too full of fun:
  It beamed when even play was done,
With ne'er thy seriousness divine!

SUNSET, TWILIGHT AND DARK

(Aet. 15)

Sunset! the dusk, and then the milder moon,
  On which the sun still grandly shines, to be
  Reflected on the earth, a memory
Of all the brilliant day and brighter noon!

Twilight!—the afterglow of setting sun;
  A period duller than the darker night,
  Of shadows got, yet born of midday light,—
The transient sadness that the day is done!

The dark!—twilight and sunset o'er too soon,
  But e'er in memory shine the golden rays.
  Look not to earth,—to heaven turn your gaze:
There beams the sunlight, mirrored in the moon!

SONNET

THE WORD "BOY"

(Aet. 15)

To MISS B. M. R., who suggested the idea.

Boy! Heaven's harps ne'er struck a happier chord
  Than when their ardor twanged thy blissful birth;
  No sweeter sound e'er echoed on the earth
Than when thou came to dwell, O rapturous word!
What in thy too short self is hidden stored,
  What well loved things: All childhood's care-free mirth;
  All youthful dreams of manhood's greater dearth;
Boyhood itself, and all its homely hoard!

What scenes beloved are thought of when thou'rt told!—
  The comrade-father speaking to his son;
The loving mother's hearty, laughing scold;
The aged's counsel; playmate's call of joy!
  O word of mirth, of sorrow, all in one,
Of life and truth, robust and tender: Boy!

SONNET

THOU ART A FLOWER FROZEN IN THE ICE

(Aet. 15)

Thou art a flower frozen in the ice,
  Which clear, translucent, shows thy beauteous form,
  Thy face so fair, thy lips so red and warm,—
Thyself the soul of all that can entice.
But kissing through a glass will not suffice:
  I would enfold thee in my anxious arms,
  Though in the wilting warmth were lost thy charms,
As droops before the sun the edelweiss.

Thou never shalt be mine, but I must stay
  And gaze with ardor on the loveless lost,
Till thou art won in some more subtle way,
By more magnetic hands, but not more bold.
  Once will I grasp thee—be what will the cost—
Ah! thou art beautiful, but O, so cold!

MADRIGAL

(Aet. 15)

Little girl in frock of blue,
  It was sweetness Venus dealt in
When she made and sent us you!
  Heaven were the home you dwelt in,
With your face so void of care;
  Giv'n a choice to voice, I'll do it:
Live with you forever there,
  And never rue it!

IN MEMORIAM OF B. D. A.

(Aet. 15)

O, much respected, loved, and honored friend,
  We pay a true and lasting gratitude,
  That must for long prevail, be oft renewed,
Remain until our dearest memories end.

What joys of life must earth have given you!
  The care-free conscience of the just and kind,
  The loftier plane of noble, higher mind,
The thoughts of those who toil and rightly do.

Unerring as the eagle's aerial flight
  Thy august course of godly life has been,
  Aware of earth's foul strife, to truth full keen,
And living pure, aspiring e'er to right!

RECESSIONAL

(Written at the closing of the Panama-Pacific International Exposition at San Francisco, December 4, 1915.)

The sun has set, the day is done;
  Time moves with his unvarying pace;
The minstrel's dead, his course is run,
  And e'en his smile has left his face.

The ships set sail, and trains depart;
  The husbandman has gone to plow.
A "Hail, farewell!" from every heart,
  And all are homeward turning now.

The joy and pomp of yesterday
  Are like great Athen's, glory gone;
This fairer city falls away
  As even mighty Rome passed on.

Back! ye toilers, play is o'er;
  Back to your loves, your lands of birth;
Back to your shops, your fields once more—
  Back to your homes o'er all the earth!

SONNET

PRESENTIMENT OF LOSS

(Aet. 16)

I wander out in the great night, alone,
One of a mighty company of things
Of giant size. Now silent whisperings
Tell me I am a brother, newly thrown
Into companionship with all the skies,
The hills and rivers, and the towering trees,
And all the stars. My heart, despite all these,
Feels a great void; its spirit cannot rise.

O'erhead and far there gleam the stars, clothed deep
In mystery; and the night is oddly strange;
The river's weird enchantings never change.
On shipless, soundless oceans am I tossed:
My soul's foreboding fears that o'er me sweep
Are uttered in one gasp of moaning, "Lost!"

SONNET

KEATS AND SHELLEY SLEEP IN ROME

(Aet. 16)

Both Keats and Shelley sleep in distant Rome!
Ah, England, never did they wish it so.
In Britain they were born, there grew to know
And learned to love their rugged island home.
When wild, romantic blood sent them to walk
Neath southern skies, and Fate, with hapless blow,
Stopped short their breath: they did not homeward go,
But rest afar from Albion's cliffs of chalk.

Let not their ashes languish in the sun
'Mid Adriatic warmth; they did not choose
Their dying place. Eternity is one
With life to them, the Isles their guiding star!
They loved the North; you, England, must they lose
Forever? Take them where their spirits are!

LONGING

(Aet. 15)

Away to the air, O my soul, today,
Away in thy flight, O my thoughts, with thee,
Where nothing is in strife's array,
And naught to greet the memory.

Away to the wild, O my breath, today,
Away to the hillside's beauty free,
Where God and Nature join their sway
And there is peace eternally.

TRANSLATIONS FROM THE GERMAN OF THEODOR STORM

THREE POEMS FROM "IMMENSEE"

(Aet. 15)

I.

"Hier an der Bergeshalde"

Here on the green hillside,
Mid breezes cool and mild,
And branches hanging low,
There sits the beauteous child.

She sits among the thyme,
Bathed in its fragrance rare.
The blue flies gently hum
And sparkle through the air.

The wood so silent stands,
And she appears so fine,
As on her flowing locks
There falls the bright sunshine.

The cuckoo calls from far,
And thus sings to my mind,
"Behold her golden eyes,
Queen of the forest-kind!"

II.

"Heute, nur heute
Bin ich so schoen"

I am so beautiful
Only, ah, only today;
Tomorrow my charms
Have all passed away.
For only an hour
Are you still my own;
Die, ah, die
Must I alone!

III.

"Er waere fast verirret"

He had nearly lost his way,
And knew not where to roam,
But a child then crossed his way,
And led his footsteps home.

THE NORTH WIND BLOWS
(Aet. 16)

The north wind blows—what a feast to feel
The frozen breath and the biting chill,
As it strikes and stabs like cold blue steel;
I stand aghast at the joyous thrill!

The north wind blows, and the rushing blast
Comes full in my face as I breast the gale.
Would that the joy could ever last,—
So dear to the blood that is hardy and hale!

Cold as it rushes, wildly mad,
Strong and fresh from the mountain snows,
The north wind blows, and I am glad;
My heart is alive when the north wind blows!

THE MOLE
(Aet. 15)

As I was sitting in the barber chair,
Losing part of my abundant hair,
The barber chattered in his funny way;
'Twas pleasing—this was what he had to say:
(He said it in a drawling tone, and droll,
For all the interest centered on a mole!)

"I had a patient, other day, who says,
'I never met in all my living days,
A barber who could keep his razor clear
Of that small mole right back of my left ear!'
'I can,' says I, and mixed the lather well,
While giving him a joke I had to tell.
'What's this you say,' says I, 'steer clear that mole?
That's what the pirate said to save his soul,
When his good ship, the 'Lizzie,' cruised too near.
'All right, sir! Yes, sir! Right behind your ear!'
And then I let my well-honed razor glide
O'er his left cheek, and o'er the other side.
The fellow then sat up to bare his neck;
Ere I began he held my hand in check,
'There's double pay in this for you,' says he,
'To shave the back and let the mole be free.'
'You're just my size,' says I, and then began.
How smoothly o'er his skin my razor ran!
I shaved the right side, then I shaved the left,
When lo! behold! the mole clear off was cleft!
I nearly swore—ill would have been the word!—
The customer, he neither spoke nor stirred!
I grabbed the caustic, quickly rubbed it on,
And shaved right care-ful-ly till he was done.
'Fine work, my boy,' says he, 'Here's thrice the pay!
You are the first to do the job this way!' ".

The barber laughed and looked up toward the wall;
I yelled, as might have turned his heart to gall.
"What's wrong?" says he, "A cut upon the ear!
It's all right now; I keep this caustic near!"

A LULLABY
TO THE EVENING STAR
(Aet. 15)

O evening star,
In the sky so far,
  Are your thoughts as bright
  As your radiant light
That ends too soon?
Do you envy the moon
  In her glorious state,
  Or is she too great
  For a love or a hate?
Does each moonlit bar
Your brilliance mar,
As you wander afar?

O evening star,
In the sky so far,
  Do you cede to the morn
  Your queenhood forlorn
  With a twinkle of scorn,
Or give it in mirth
To day on the earth?
  Do you give o'er your place
  With a queenlike grace,
  And gaze on the face
Of your king, the sun,
The regal one,
When the night is done?

O evening star,
As you wander far,
  On your path in the sky—
  Ah, your winking eye!
Are you sleepy? Tell!
And wink farewell;
Your bewitching spell
  Has me in your power!
  Ah, late is the hour!
I am sleepy, I—
Are you leaving the sky?
O, must you die?
Good-bye! Good-bye!
  O evening star,
  As you wander far!

SHE
(Aet. 15)

She is a lovely lass, this maid of mine,
With light brown hair and eyes that always shine;
Oh, joy divine to have those tresses flow
Near me, and let her feel the love I know!

OUR SWIMMING HOLE
(Aet. 16)

It wasn't a river a half mile wide,
That flowed abreast to the ocean tide;
It wasn't a beach where the billows roll:
In a sparkling creek was our swimming hole!

No crowds of the city defiled its banks;
It knew not the bounds of the social ranks;
Here culture had made no rising scale:
We were all of us barefoot, tanned, and hale.

We had the same work and had the same joys,
And what is more, we were all of us boys.
We had the same woods, same hills, same fields,
And the same swimming hole, and the joy it yields.
We had the same woes, same hate for the school,
But this we forgot in the old swimming pool.

It wasn't a river a half mile wide,
That flowed abreast to the ocean tide;
It wasn't a beach where the billows roll:
In a sparkling creek was our swimming hole!

WHEN CELIA SPOKE
Rondeau
(Aet. 16)

When Celia spoke, her cigarette,
Between her lips in dalliance set,
  Moved up and down with measured stroke,
  While words fared forth on wings of smoke—
Ah, words that I shall ne'er forget!

If in my work or play I fret,
That memory is an amulet,
  And I forgive what made me choke
    When Celia spoke.

My thoughts were fond, my eyes were wet,
And tears flowed like a rivulet.
  But truth I will not ever cloak:
  I loved, but could not stand the smoke;
I had to leave, though with regret,
    When Celia spoke!

O SWEET, MY MAID

(Aet. 16)

O sweet, my maid, as I wander here
  Beneath this leafy bough,
Ah, greater far would be my bliss
  Were you but with me now.

The fields are bright, the hills are fair,
  And the sky so softly blue,
But none of these, my lovely maid,
  Is half so sweet as you.

Now gay are the flowers, now green the world,
  But tomorrow the earth is bare;
With summer they fade, but you are true;
  Ah, you are forever fair.

AMBITION

(Aet. 15)

I live within a little home,
Walled in on every side by hills;
My streets are forests' leafy loam,—
I wander there as random wills.
The trees my sole companions are,
Save one by night, the evening star.
I know the joy of mountainside,
Of seas of green, blue skies and wide.

Of all the gifts that life can give,
I strive for one that outlives age:
Not for great honor while I live,
Nor lauds of men that ill presage
The depth of immortality;
But in the realm of poesy
Some niche may I e'er fondly claim,
Wherein to humbly write my name.

But will my name e'er gain that state;
Ah, will it reach beyond these hills?
Will that desire e'er consummate,
And songs of mine give nations thrills?
Ah, hills, that bind life closely in,—
Not insurmountable! I win
If I shall rise above the earth,
And living, gain immortal birth!

INDEX

ON REACHING SIXTEEN

AND OTHER VERSES

Page

Dedication 5
Introduction 6
Foreword 7
Poems—
On Reaching Sixteen 9
The Open Road 10
March, In Sonoma County 11
In Bloom 11
On Reaching One 12
Geyser Peak At Night 12
On Reading Wordsworth's "Tintern Abbey" 13
Poppies 13
Fragment 13
Roses 13
The Truce of Peace 14
To Patience 14
Anxiety 14
The Potato Blossom 14
Thy Mother's Picture 14
The War's Cry to Womanhood 15
Poet's Epitaph 16
Age 17
For These 18
Amo Unam Solam 19
To a Spring Poet 19
Washington 19
Indian Summer 20
No Sorrow, No Regret 21
To An Edelweiss 21
Columbus—1915 22
Two Poems on Charles Frohman 22
Youth
Age
Mr. Germs 23
The Farmer's Cow 23
To ———— 23
Sunset, Twilight and Dark 24
The Word "Boy" 24
Thou Art a Flower Frozen In the Ice 24
Madrigal 25
In Memoriam of B. D. A. 25
Recessional 25
Presentiment of Loss 26
Keats and Shelley Sleep In Rome 26
Longing 26
Translations From German 27
Poems from "Immensee"
1. Hier an der Bergeshalde
2. Heute, nur heute
Bin ich so schoen'
3. Er waere fast verirret
The North Wind Blows 28
The Mole 28
A Lullaby To The Evening Star 29
She 29
Our Swiming Hole 30
When Celia Spoke 30
O Sweet, My Maid 31
Ambition 31